

Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Coalition Meeting Minutes: December 1, 2009

Welcome: Richard Leatherman welcomed the group.

November 2009 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

ABCCM's Veterans' Restoration Quarters:

Michael Reich, director, presented an overview of programs. VRQ serves 148 veterans through their relationship with the VA, and their programming includes 45 permanent supportive housing beds, 6 civilian beds, 20 emergency shelter beds, and 7 intake beds. Since moving from the Coxe Avenue shelter to their current location, they've been able to grow from serving 70 people to 220 people.

Spare Change for Real Change:

Adrian Vassallo, treasurer for the Asheville Downtown Association, presented the ADA Foundation's initiative to discourage panhandling downtown by encouraging donations to Spare Change for Real Change boxes instead; those donations are then matched by downtown businesses, and that money is distributed in grants. Last year, a total of \$10,000 was awarded in grants to Western Carolina Rescue Ministries, Homeward Bound, and Salvation Army. The program now has new promotional materials and new information on their website (www.ashevilledowntown.org, under the About Us section) and is currently recruiting new matching sponsors in hopes of awarding more grant money this year. 100% of funds raised are distributed to agencies with a focus on programs that move individuals out of homelessness. The grant application will be available online by the end of the year, and grants (which are unrestricted) will be awarded in January.

Agency Updates:

- *Detention Bureau:* The jail has a capacity of 524 and currently has about 450 people incarcerated, with an average stay of 9.2 days. Major Glen Matayabas is beginning to attend Coalition meetings to hear more about what's going on in the homeless community and what they can do to help.
- *Continuum of Care:* Robin Merrell and Amy Sawyer submitted our CoC application last week for \$945,724 to fund 6 projects; thank you for your responsiveness and participation, allowing them to complete the application.
- *Western Carolina Rescue Ministries:* Micheal Woods has been named the Interim Executive Director and is looking forward to building better relationships with other service providers. WCRM is still in the capital campaign and plans to offer more employment training and education in the new facility.
- *Homeward Bound:* A HOPE now has a full-time, in-house licensed substance abuse counselor, John Sanders, who is a graduate of FIRST at Blue Ridge. He's making new connections to get clients in programs and not just in crisis response. A HOPE's hours are 7 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday, and 7 am to 12 pm weekends.

Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR):

Point-in-Time Count: Amy Sawyer distributed the Participation Agreement and requested that agencies return it to her by December 18 to clarify whether or not they'll be participating in the upcoming Point-in-Time Count and how many volunteers they'll need to conduct the count. The Agreement requests contact information for the point person at each agency who will coordinate the agency's participation in the count. Participating agencies are requested to send a representative to the training on January 14, 2010 at 12 pm at the Asheville Housing Authority; the count will take place on January 27, 2010. Amy will email all related documents once she receives confirmation from HUD.

Homeless Coalition website: Emily Ball discussed some common themes found on websites for other cities' coalitions and asked for a committee to be formed to work on website development for this Coalition. Brian Alexander, Meredith Hammond, Moss Bliss, and Stan Vincent volunteered to serve on the committee, which Emily will coordinate.

Mission: The following mission statement was unanimously agreed upon: *To prevent and reduce homelessness in the City of Asheville and Buncombe County by coordinating efforts of community partners to provide resources and support to homeless persons.*

Vision: A Vision was not agreed upon, but the recommendation was made to work on it individually and come to a consensus via email or at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: January 5, 2010 at 12:30 p.m. at Western Carolina Rescue Ministries.